

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
May 16 & 17, 2006**

The regular meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 9 A.M., on May 16, 2006, in Room 1D2 of the Transportation Building in Olympia, Washington.

Commissioners present at the meeting were: Chair O'Neal, Ed Barnes, Bob Distler, Dick Ford, Elmira Forner (absent May 16th), Carol Moser and Dale Stedman.

MINUTES APPROVAL

It was moved by Commissioner Ford and seconded by Commissioner Barnes to approve the meeting minutes of March 21 & 22, 2006 and March 23, 2006 Ferry Tariff meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

ADOPT COMMISSION STRATEGIC PLAN

Reema Griffith, Executive Director, presented the Commission's 2007-09 Strategic Plan for adoption.

It was moved by Commissioner Ford and seconded by Commissioner Moser to adopt the Commission's 2007-09 Strategic Plan and approve its submittal to the Office of Financial Management. The motion passed unanimously.

SECRETARY'S REPORT – HOOD CANAL GRAVING DOCK REPORT

Secretary MacDonald presented his report on the Hood Canal Bridge Rehabilitation Project and Graving Dock Program to the Commission. He noted that this report was developed based on the many questions that were being asked regarding the project. He discussed the consultation process, its definition and some of the issues surrounding the process. The report provides some of the documents themselves or extracts from the documents and where they can be found. The Secretary's Hood Canal Graving Dock Report can be found at: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/accountability/hcbgravingdock/>.

Commissioners raised questions regarding the decisions that were made during the process. Randy Hain, Olympic Region Administrator and Secretary MacDonald explained specific conditions that resulted in decisions that were made.

Secretary MacDonald recognized the presence of Francis Charles, Chair of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. He expressed that the relationship between the Department and the Tribe remains to be committed to mutual respect and communication. Although the issues have been and remain difficult, the mutual respect has been a critical element in the discussion.

Ms. Charles thanked the Department and the Commission for inviting them to attend today's meeting. Chair O'Neal invited her to make comment, but she declined.

UPDATE ON RTID

Amy Arnis, Deputy Director, Planning and Programming, WSDOT, provided an update to the Commission regarding the Regional Transportation Investment District. She explained that organizational efforts are continuing to be made in order to reengage the planning process.

RAIL STUDY – INTERIM REPORT # 1

Michael Fischer, Project Manager, Cambridge Systematics, Inc., and staff presented a *summary* of the Statewide Rail Capacity and System Needs Study Interim Report # 1. The *summary* covers the findings and conclusions of Phase one of a three Phase study. He provided an overview on the purpose of the study as mandated by the Legislature. The summary highlights key policy questions that include what the freight rail infrastructure and service needs of the state are; passenger rail infrastructure and service needs of the state are; and what the key infrastructure, operations and institutional obstacles are to meeting the state's rail needs.

The Phase I study findings conclude that the state's rail network is at or near capacity, and that service quality is strained along with increasing rates. The capacity problems result from both inadequate infrastructure and inefficient operating practices. Washington's rail policy must address local industry, community and congestion needs as well as Port access to serve the state and the nation.

GRAY NOTEBOOK QUARTERLY UPDATE

Daniela Bremmer, Director, Strategic Assessment, Strategic Planning and Programming, WSDOT, presented the quarterly update of the Gray Notebook. This update contains an annual update on aviation, safety rest areas, winter maintenance and trucks, goods and freight report. Also included are the "*Beige Pages*" which contain a quarterly update on the Department's project delivery program.

Kirk Fredrickson, Rail Planning & Policy Coordinator, WSDOT, provided an overview of the Passenger Rail Program performance measures. The primary focus of the presentation was ridership and issues with on time performance. He shared highlights of the Northwest Rail Corridor Intercity Passenger Rail Plan 1997-2020 noting that over the past ten years, Washington and Oregon have commissioned services of feasibility studies to assess the problems, cost and benefits of providing public investment to upgrade the corridor for safe, faster, more frequent and reliable passenger rail service. The plan also highlights efforts that have recently been completed and projects that are underway. (The Gray Notebook quarter ending March 31, 2006 can be found by accessing the following link: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/accountability/Archives/GraynotebookMar-06.pdf>)

Elizabeth Stratton, Freight Policy and Project Manager, WSDOT, provided an annual update on the Truck, Goods and Freight system. The Department is continually seeking to enhance available freight industry performance data through research. She explained that freight growth is fueled by globalization, new competitive industry trends and technology changes. Truck volumes on four major highways in Washington show steady increases based on data collected.

Through research, data analysis and collaboration between public and private industry, the Department is expanding the understanding needed to explore the potential of freight transportation in Washington.

Penny Haeger, Safety Rest Area Program Planner, WSDOT, provided an overview of rest area service level trends based on data collection.

Thanh Nguyen, Facility Planning and Delivery Manager, WSDOT, provided an update on safety rest area conditions. The condition of safety rest areas is based on a biennial assessment process. This process allows for calculation of the current cost to correct site and building deficiencies.

Stan Allison, Manager, Airport Operations and Eric Johnson, Airport Construction Project Supervisor, WSDOT, presented an annual update focusing primarily on four areas: Pavement ratings, aircraft registration, Local Airport Grant Program and airport land use compatibility assistance. Mr. Allison emphasized that the investment made in pavement is showing results with a performance goal of 77.39 percent of an overall targeted 78 percent. This indicates that the investment has been beneficial. He also provided updates on aircraft registration and local airport grants.

Paula Hammond, Chief of Staff, WSDOT, provided an overview of the Gray Notebook, “Beige Pages” for the quarter ending March 31, 2006. For further information on the “Beige Pages” please link to:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/accountability/Archives/GraynotebookMar-06.pdf> .

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Stedman, WTP Team lead, provided an update on the status of Washington Transportation Plan. He shared that a number of outreach meetings are scheduled throughout the state. The plan is in draft form and the team will be reviewing it for suggested changes.

Commissioner Ford, Tolling Team lead, provided an update on the progress of the Tolling Study. He noted that policy recommendations need to be understandable when presented to the Legislature.

Chair O’Neal, Rail Study Team lead, shared that the policy direction is taking shape and the initial report is in the process of being finalized.

Commissioner Forner, Transportation Innovative Partnerships Team lead, shared that there is on-going policy discussion with TIP Director Jeff Doyle. She moved on to comment on the TPAB’s upcoming June 2, 2006 meeting during which the preliminary Hood Canal Bridge audit report will be discussed.

Commissioner Distler shared highlights of various ferry meetings that he has attended. He noted that there is ongoing discussion regarding funding and service level assumptions.

TOLLING STUDY UPDATE

Jeff Buxbaum, Project Manager, Cambridge Systematics, Inc., provided an update of the project status. He noted that today's presentation highlights the Commission's recommendations and overall policy and implementation strategy. In closing he outlined outreach plans that include roundtables with community leaders, editorial board meetings and open houses around the state. For further information regarding this presentation you may visit the Commission's website at: <http://www.wstc.wa.gov/Tolling/default.htm> .

PUBLIC AND LEGISLATOR COMMENT PERIOD

Paul Locke, citizen, shared his concerns regarding the escalated cost of the Alaskan Way Viaduct project.

The Commission meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m., on May 17, 2006.

WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DAN O'NEAL, Chair

DICK FORD, Vice-Chair

EDWARD BARNES, Member

CAROL MOSER, Member

ELMIRA FORNER, Member

ROBERT S. DISTLER, Member

DALE STEDMAN, Member

DOUGLAS MACDONALD, Ex-Officio Member
Secretary of Transportation

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

DATE OF APPROVAL